



To Your Health

A Patient Health Education Publication

July and August 2006

Miami VA Healthcare System

Volume 1 Issue 4

July is Healthy Aging Month

Did you know?

A fall can be a life-altering event. Nearly 1 in 3 adults aged 65 and older fall. Falls are the leading cause of injury in older adults.

Taking care of yourself can lower your chance of falling.

- Regular exercise can improve muscle tone, flexibility, balance and keep you strong. Choose exercises or activities that develop balance and coordination.
- Talk with your primary care provider and team pharmacist about your medications and their side effects regarding balance and coordination.
- Stand up slowly after sitting or lying down.
- Wear shoes that have good support, have low heels and have a rubber-sole or thin non-slip sole. Avoid wearing only socks.
- Hold onto handrails when going up and down the stairs.

August is Immunization Month

Each year, more than 46,000 adults die from diseases that could have been prevented with a vaccine. This includes the flu.

Vaccines protect you and others around you from infectious diseases. The vaccine protects you by teaching your immune system to act as though you had the disease.

Are there side effects to vaccines?

Some discomfort at the injection site may occur. Sometimes you can have a mild fever the next day. More serious reactions are very rare.

Benefits of vaccination far outweigh the side effects and certainly outweigh the risk of disease and its complications.

VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
www.nchpdp.med.va.gov

Mark Your Calendar!

Friday July 14, 2006

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

T.C. Doherty Auditorium

A Community Resources Information Fair will be held by the Miami VA Healthcare System sponsored by Recreation Therapy. The focus is Life enrichment: Recreation and Parks, Transit, Safety, Security, and Support Services will be represented by a variety of community agencies.

In addition, Patient Health Education will be hosting a Healthier US Veterans booth with information for veterans about the program and how they can be involved.

This fair will be held Friday July 14, 2006 at Miami VA Medical Center 1201 NW 16th Street, Second Floor, T.C. Doherty Auditorium from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. A variety of community agencies have been invited.

Please note parking is not guaranteed.

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The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have joined forces in an effort to improve the health of the nation.

The focus of this joint initiative, HealthierUS Veterans, is to educate veterans, their families, and communities about the health risks of obesity and diabetes.

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What is HealthierUS Veterans?

• Titled HealthierUS Veterans, this cooperative initiative includes five components:

1. A Fit for Life Veteran Volunteer Corps
2. Collaboration between VA medical facilities and Steps to a HealthierUS and other HHS programs
3. VA's MOVE! Weight Management Program
4. A "Prescription for Health"
5. A national communication and health promotion campaign

• HealthierUS Veterans is designed to help America's veterans, their families, and communities improve their health by eating healthy and being active.

Why HealthierUS Veterans?

- The national prevalence of overweight/obesity is 64 percent. In those receiving medical care within VA, the prevalence is over 70 percent.
- The Surgeon General issued a call to action in 2001 for overweight and obesity.
- Overweight and obesity and their associated health problems have a significant economic impact on the U.S. health care system (USDHHS, 2001).
- Research studies show that overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for a number of health conditions, one of the foremost is diabetes.
- There are 20.8 million people in the United States who have diabetes. In the population of those receiving medical care within VA, the diabetes prevalence is 20 percent.

Did you know?

- You can start becoming more active by taking a walk every day. Your VA primary care provider or physical therapist can put in a request to provide you with a pedometer (step counter) and a walking plan that suits you.
- You can start a community walking group with your family and friends, and other veterans. Call the Patient Health Education Center at 305-575-7000 ext. 4377 for more information.

Q. Is HealthierUS Veterans an exercise or weight loss program, or diet?

A. *HealthierUS Veterans is none of those, but rather a program that focuses on eating healthy and being more active.*

Q. Is HealthierUS Veterans designed for veterans (people) of all ages and ability levels?

A. *Yes it is. HealthierUS Veterans has activities for ambulatory and wheelchair veterans, and men and women of all ages.*

Q. How do I volunteer to help?

A. *Contact the Voluntary Services office at 305-575-7000 ext. 3140. Tell them you want to help with HealthierUS Veterans.*

Q. What is MOVE!?

A. *MOVE! is VA's national weight management program for veterans. MOVE! can help you lose weight, keep it off and improve your health.*

Q. Does the Miami VA Healthcare System have a MOVE! Program?

A. *Yes. Call the Patient Health Education Center at 305-575-7000 ext. 4377 for more information.*

Q. I am not a veteran. Can I participate in MOVE!? Can my spouse/partner participate with me?

A. *In its present form, MOVE! is designed specifically for veterans using VA facilities. Many facilities encourage family members to participate in group sessions. You are welcome to use the MOVE!23, MOVE! handouts, and any other materials available on the MOVE! website www.move.va.gov.*

Q. Is there a charge to participate in MOVE!?

A. *Right now, there is a copayment charge of \$15 for eligibility priority 7 and 8 enrollees and some others. This is for face-to-face individual and group appointments. If you have questions about this, check with your eligibility office at 305-575-7000 ext. 3620.*

Q. What is the Prescription for Health?

A. *Your VA medical provider can give you a Prescription for Health to encourage you to be more active. This prescription includes recommended steps to walk or distance to roll in a wheelchair.*

Q. Is there anything going on in my community to promote this initiative?

A. *A number of national and regional events have been planned. For more information on these events, contact the Miami VA Healthcare System Patient Health Education Center at 305-575-7000 ext. 4377.*

Information courtesy of: <http://www.healthierusveterans.va.gov/Default.asp>